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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2755

March 8, 1996

HOUSE APPROVES FARM BILL -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said House passage of the Farm Bill (February 29) represented some improvement over the earlier version passed by the House Agriculture Committee. Glickman said, "The particular areas of improvement were in the areas of conservation and exports, which are similar to the provisions approved by the Senate." The new farm legislation is needed for producers to make sound planting decisions. However, Glickman said, "This bill does fall short of provisions for nutrition, research, and rural development. In addition, the legislation, as passed by the House, would directly challenge the safety net that farm programs currently offer." The legislation in most cases also excludes new farmers from receiving these payments. Glickman noted that the Conference Committee must make improvements in both the Senate and the House bills before he can recommend the President sign the legislation. **Contact: Laura Trivers (202) 720-4623.**

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH COMMEMORATED -- For the first time, children in thousands of classrooms will be using new educational tools to motivate them to improve their diets as schools prepare to implement historic policy changes to ensure healthy meals at school. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman and Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Ellen Haas joined students (March 4) at the New Hampshire Estates Elementary School in Silver Spring, Maryland, to highlight Team Nutrition education tools in the classrooms and recognize the school's commitment to Team Nutrition. Glickman said, "The educational tools are designed to be fun for children and teach them about improving their diet." The event showcased nutritional education activities developed through Team Nutrition partnerships. **Contact: Alicia Bambara (703) 305-2039.**

CROPS IGNORE WINTRY BLASTS -- Whether it's icy wind or knee-deep snow, it hasn't stopped Tom Kaspar, plant scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service from growing crops in Iowa. His crop is growing on 7,000 pounds of soil that fill each of six metal bins inside a USDA laboratory on the flatlands of Iowa. Kaspar can dictate or duplicate whatever kind of weather he wants. Kaspar's "garden" grows in two chambers each two-stories tall, which are far different from a greenhouse. These chambers and a third one are being used for the first time at the National Soil Tilth Laboratory in Ames, Iowa. A stairway takes Kaspar and his colleagues to the lower level where each of the 3.3-foot square by 5-foot deep soil bins holds the 7,000 pounds of Iowa farmland. Holes in the side of each bin let scientists use fiber-optic probes to see plant roots grow at various depths. On the upper level, plants as tall as corn can be grown to maturity. Kaspar said, "Experiments in the chambers will give farmers new findings, for example, on how soil temperatures help or hinder the growth of plant roots." All this and other research continues year-round in the chambers. **Contact: Hank Becker (301) 344-2769.**

PROMOTION AND RESEARCH PROGRAM APPROVED -- Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman announced (March 5) that a proposed national promotion, research and information program for sheep and wool passed in an industry-wide referendum. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), an agency in the marketing and regulatory program mission area, has oversight responsibility for federal research and promotion programs. AMS Administrator Lon Hatamiya said, "Of the 19,801 valid ballots cast in the February 6 referendum, 10,707 (54.1 percent) favored and 9,094 (45.9 percent) opposed implementation of the Sheep and Wool Promotion, Research, Education and Information Order." Those persons voting in the referendum who cast valid ballots and favored the order accounted for 40 percent of the total production voted. Those voters opposing the order accounted for 60 percent of production voted. The final order and effective date for beginning of the program will be published in a future issue of the Federal Register. **Contact: Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.**

ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS FOR TOBACCO -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced (March 5) acreage allotments and price support levels for six kinds of tobacco for the 1996 marketing year. The 1996 price support levels for the six kinds of tobacco announced range between 1.7 and 2.7 percent higher than the 1995-crop levels. USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation will establish individual grade loan rates before the marketing season begins. The 1996-crop marketing assessment to be paid by both growers and buyers will be 0.5 percent each of the support level, or a total of 1 percent per pound. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

CCC INTEREST RATE -- Grant Buntrock, Executive Vice President of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announced (March 1) that commodity loans disbursed in March by the USDA's CCC will carry a 4-7/8 percent interest rate. The 4-7/8 percent rate is down from February's 5-1/8 percent and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

NAL CATALOG ON INTERNET -- ISIS, the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) of the National Agricultural Library (NAL), the largest agricultural library in the world, is now available over the Internet at telnet address <opac.nal.usda.gov>. The catalog can be searched Monday through Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., EST. ISIS contains two agricultural databases, the NAL Online Catalog and the Journal Article Citation database. Internet access to these resources will help to meet a critical need for agricultural information worldwide. The NAL Online Catalog and Journal Article Citation database is updated daily by NAL and contains the most current bibliographic citations for books, reports, maps, periodicals, audiovisuals, CD-ROMs, electronic media and other material being added to the NAL collection. The National Agricultural Library is part of USDA'S Agricultural Research Service. **Contact: Brian Norris (301) 504-6778.**

FAX AND INTERNET -- You can obtain our radio and TV programming information and the *Broadcasters Letter* through your facsimile machine by calling USDA's AgNewsFax or by accessing USDA's Home Page. **FAX:** Use the phone connected to your machine to call (202) 690-3944. At voice prompts, press 1, press 4, then to receive **Broadcasters Letter**, press 9200; radio newslines information, press 9250; TV contents billboard, press 9260; TV scripts, press 9270. After all your selections, then press #, press 3, and press the **start** button on your FAX machine. **INTERNET:** Address for this letter is <http://www.usda.gov/news/bdcaster/bdcaster.htm>.

EDITED BY LESLIE PARKER

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #2023 -- In this edition, Gary Crawford takes you shopping in the high-tech supermarket of today. **(Weekly cassette -- five minute documentary).**

CONSUMER TIME #1501-- High-tech grocery shopping. Something different for meat lovers. Consumer credit tips. Americans are ignoring new apple varieties. The new detergents. **(Weekly cassette -- consumer features).**

AGRITAPE #2015 -- Uncertainty about China. Farm finance outlook remains mixed. India's importance to U.S. agriculture. A huge job: the first Chinese agricultural census. USDA helps producers ship dairy cattle to Turkey. **(Weekly cassette -- news features).**

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, March 18, former USSR update. Tuesday, March 19, sugar and sweeteners report and weekly weather and crop outlook. Wednesday, March 20, agricultural outlook report. Thursday, March 21, dairy outlook. Friday, March 22, cattle on feed report and livestock slaughter report. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newslines carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5:00 p.m., ET, each working day and 10:30 a.m. on crop report days.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- March is National Nutrition Month. USDA is marking the occasion by promoting its "Team Nutrition" program in elementary schools. Patrick O'Leary reports from a suburban Washington, D.C. elementary school that hosted Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman and USDA Under secretary for Food, Nutrition & Consumer Services Ellen Haas on March 4. Continuing the National Nutrition Month theme, USDA's "Team Nutrition" is sending school food service personnel to special training sessions. In a pilot project, school cooks are learning from chef instructors at culinary schools how to make healthier lunches that also are appealing to students. Patrick O'Leary reports from the Johnston & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island, where a workshop took place a few weeks ago. Featured remarks are from USDA Under secretary for Food, Nutrition & Consumer Services Ellen Haas and Chef Michael Moskwa.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA Secretary Dan Glickman comments on farm bill progress and the Russian ban on U.S. poultry.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWS FEEDS: Thursdays from 3:45 to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 402R (located at 89 degrees West), Transponder 13, Vertical Polarity, Downlink Frequency 3960 MHZ.

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services. Call Larry Quinn, (202)720-6072, or write to: Room 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300. Internet E-mail: LQuinn@USDA.GOV.

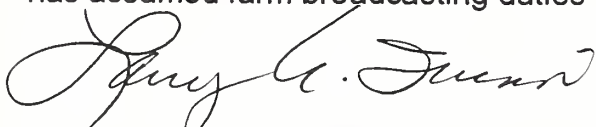
OFF MIKE

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?...That's the topic of a weekly 6:00 - 7:00 a.m. live radio show that **Cyndi Young** (WTAX/WWTE/WPRC, Springfield, IL) does during winter months from local coffee shops, grain elevators or other gathering points. She involves both active and retired farmers who choose the topics for discussion. Illinois Director of Agriculture Becky Doyle has been among participants.

NEW ASSISTANT...to farm broadcaster **Gary DiGiuseppe** (KWMT, Fort Dodge, IA) since November is **Mary Ann Haas** who was formerly news director for a Hoopeston, IL radio station. Growing up in the suburbs of Chicago, Mary Ann is a print journalism/radio broadcasting graduate of St. Mary's College in Winona, MN who doubles as both an agricultural and news reporter for KWMT.

BEEF CATTLE PRICES...have dropped below the cost of production, yet the lamb market is at an all-time high, reports **Jim Thoreson** (KWAT, Watertown, SD). Beef production is the number one source of agricultural income for South Dakota so this is a concern as farmers look forward to spring. Temperatures in the first week of March gave no hint of spring, however, averaging 20 degrees below normal. Snowdrifts 8-10 feet high still surrounded many farmsteads having blown off the fields.

NEW FACES...have joined **Miles Carter** (KMZU/KAOL/WHB, Carrollton & Kansas City, MO) recently. **Melisa Bertz**, a Kansas State University (KSU) graduate and a former member of the KSU livestock judging team is handling farm broadcasting duties on KMZU/KAOL. She was a vocational agriculture teacher in Kansas for three years and replaces **Jay Truitt** who is now with the Missouri Soybean Growers. **Rich Hawkins**, formerly with KRVN, Lexington, NE for 16 years, has assumed farm broadcasting duties for WHB following **Paul Pippert** who recently retired.



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